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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9394
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2250
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5712
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9316
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6898
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RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2685
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000561

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: RUMORS OF POSSIBLE MONK-LED DEMONSTRATIONS
IN OCTOBER

Classified By: Political Officer Marc Shaw for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) 88 Generation Students leader Toe Kyaw Hlaing told P/E chief and Poloff August 25 that, according to his monastery contacts, monks may be planning peaceful demonstrations and symbolic refusal of alms on October 3, the Full Moon day of Thadingyut (end of Buddhist lent). (Note: During the September 2007 uprising, monks overturned their alms bowls as a sign of protest to signal dissatisfaction with the regime. End note.) Monks reportedly will demand the release of all of Burma's political prisoners, including monks, and an apology from the regime for its actions against monks. Press contacts report that some monks have used radio broadcasts to call for the regime to apologize for actions taken against monks since September 2007, and to do so no later than noon on October 2. If no apology is received, according to a monk quoted by Radio Free Asia, demonstrations will begin at noon October 30. Under a slightly different scenario, Toe Kyaw Hlaing said, the protests, if they occur, would happen on October 3 and could involve monasteries in Rangoon, Sittwe, and Magwe.

¶2. (C) Toe Kyaw Hlaing told us August 26 that five large monasteries were recently raided by the police (no information as to date or location) due to circulation by monks of a statement calling for the October 3 demonstration. He added that police have also infiltrated many monasteries around the country; one police officer related to a family friend described receiving two week's of training before disguising himself as a monk and entering a monastery to gain intelligence on monk activities. Toe Kyaw Hlaing said monasteries have noticed the police presence and veteran monks are careful to avoid talking to new entrants.

¶3. (C) Comment: In September 2007 monks took to the streets following the regime's refusal to apologize for an incident earlier that month in Pakokku, in which authorities beat several monks who were peacefully protesting. In 2007 monks gave the regime a set deadline by which to respond, and began refusing alms immediately after that deadline passed. The reports of planned activities in October bear similarities to the origins of 2007's large-scale protests, though it's premature to assume a repetition. Nevertheless, these indicators merit watching, particularly as the September 4 (Pakokku), September 18 (start of wide-scale

demonstrations) and September 25-27 (crackdown on protestors)
anniversaries draw near.
VAJDA